

DEVELOPING PROPOSAL FOR THE PRACTICE OF RECOGNIZING AND AWARD-GIVING QUALITY GREEN SPACE IN MALAYSIA



Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia, in Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Science

February 2022

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Abstract of thesis presented to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia in fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Science

DEVELOPING PROPOSAL FOR THE PRACTICE OF RECOGNIZING AND AWARD-GIVING QUALITY GREEN SPACE IN MALAYSIA

Ву

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February 2022

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In Malaysia, the agenda to provide quality green space for its living environment was outlined within the National Landscape Policy. However, the aspiration towards it remained dormant and progressing slowly. Problems like the conflict and lacking of method to evaluate the quality green space worth and blunt adoption of approaches from temperate countries into tropical country can cause the Malaysia to experience shortage in quality green space. A popular and feasible approach is needed to garner everyone attention in bolstering the quality green space development in Malaysia. Hence, this study aims to identify a new approach for appraising, rate and assess quality green space in Malaysia. To gather this information, a personal interview using a semi-structured open-ended interview was conducted with 15 professionals involved in the Malaysian landscape industry. The interviews garnered their opinions, standpoint, and perceptions on the research subject concerning the state of recognition and awards in Malaysian landscape industry, factor affecting quality green space in Malaysia, and proposal for the recognition and awards scheme quality green space in Malaysia. Then, a thematic analysis was used to extrapolate the findings. The results elicit several important findings on the topic. First, there was no recognition and awards scheme for quality green space in Malaysia. Results also averred the recognition and award scheme was important to provide individual, group or product a formal recognition, publicizing the quality green space and those responsible for it, helps advertising the landscape industry and potential to be adopt as management tool to assist nation green space provisioning. However, issues like the schemes' ephemeral effect, schemes' transparency and commodization of green space may hinder the good purpose of recognition and awards if no intervention were made. Findings suggested by transforming the practice of recognition and awards into a certification program and inviting more party during the scheme evaluation process, ones may reduce the issues dwelled within the proposed idea. This research also succeeds to identified 22 imperative factors for quality green space in Malaysia. These 22 factors were subsequently grouped into three key components known as, the physical and environment of green space, the social and experience in green space, and the management and place-keeping of green space. It was suggested that all of these components were highly interlinked and failure from one component may lead to a breakdown for quality green space provisioning. In addition, this study also managed to propose the basic requirement for the practice of recognizing and awards quality green space in Malaysia. Within the proposal, the scheme objective, assessment framework, evaluation criteria, scoring and process were highlighted based on the finding from the literature identified. The interviews also found that there was a demand and positive feedback from the experts on the need for recognition and award practices to bolster the quality green spaces and improve the landscape industry. The information gleaned from this study would be useful to the Malaysian National Landscape Department, green space practitioner, researcher, and local authority working to improve the quality of the place and the quality of life.

Keywords: Award, determinant factor, expert interview, recognition system, quality park.

Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia sebagai memenuhi keperluan untuk ijazah Master Sains

CADANGAN MEMBANGUNKAN AMALAN PENGIKTIRAFAN DAN PENGANUGERAHAN KAWASAN HIJAU BERKUALITI DI MALAYSIA

Oleh

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Di Malaysia, agenda untuk menyediakan kawasan hijau berkualiti untuk persekitaran kehidupan digariskan dalam Dasar Landskap Nasional. Namun, hasrat ke arahnya masih pasif dan berkembang perlahan. Masalah seperti konflik dan kekurangan kaedah untuk menilai kualiti kawasan hijau dan penggunaan pendekatan yang melulu dari negara beriklim sederhana ke negara tropika boleh menyebabkan Malaysia mengalami kekurangan kawasan hijau yang berkualiti. Pendekatan yang popular dan mudah untuk dilaksanakan diperlukan untuk menarik perhatian semua orang dalam memperkukuh pembangunan kawasan hijau yang berkualiti di Malaysia. Kajian ini bertujuan untuk mengenal pasti pendekatan baru untuk menilai, mengelaskan dan mentaksir kawasan hijau yang berkualiti di Malaysia. Untuk mengumpulkan maklumat berkaitan, teknik wawancara bersemuka menggunakan temu bual semi-struktur dilakukan dengan 15 profesional yang terlibat dalam industri landskap Malaysia. Wawancara tersebut mengumpulkan pendapat, sudut pandang, dan persepsi mereka terhadap subjek penyelidikan mengenai keadaan pengiktirafan dan penganugerahan dalam industri landskap Malaysia, faktor yang mempengaruhi kawasan hijau yang berkualiti di Malaysia, dan cadangan untuk skema pengiktirafan dan penganugerahan kawasan hijau yang berkualiti di Malaysia. Seterusnya, analisis tematik digunakan untuk mengeluarkan dapatan kajian. Hasil kajian telah mengariskan beberapa penemuan penting mengenai topik yang dikaji. Pertama, Malaysia tidak mempunyai skema yang khusus untuk pengiktirafan dan penganugerahan untuk kawasan hijau yang berkualiti. Temu ramah juga membuktikan amalan pengiktirafan dan penganugerahan adalah penting untuk memberikan pengiktirafan formal kepada individu, kumpulan atau produk, mempublikasikan kawasan hijau yang berkualiti dan mereka yang bertanggungjawab, membantu mengiklankan industri landskap dan berpotensi untuk diguna pakai sebagai alat pengurusan untuk membantu penyediaan kawasan hijau negara. Namun, isuisu seperti kesan singkat skema, ketelusan skema dan komodisasi kawasan hijau dapat mengekang faedah pengiktirafan dan penganugerahan sekiranya tiada langkah intervensi dilakukan. Hasil kajian turut menyarankan agar amalan pengiktirafan dan penganugerahan dialih kepada sebuah program pensijilan dan penglibatan dari pelbagai pihak semasa proses penilaian skema dapat mengurangkan masalah yang berkaitan dengan isu skema. Penyelidikan ini juga berjaya mengenal pasti 22 faktor penting bagi ruang hijau yang berkualiti di Malaysia. Kesemua faktor ini kemudiannya dikelompokkan kepada tiga komponen utama yang dikenali sebagai, fizikal dan persekitaran kawasan hijau, sosial dan pengalaman di kawasan hijau, dan pengurusan dan penjagaan kawasan hijau. Kesemua komponen ini dipercayai saling berkaitan dan kegagalan dari salah satu komponen dapat menyebabkan kesukaran dalam penyediaan kawasan hijau yang berkualiti. Di samping itu, kajian ini juga berjaya mencadangkan panduan asas untuk amalan pengiktirafan dan penganugerahan kawasan hijau yang berkualiti di Malaysia. Proposal yang dicadangkan mengandungi objektif skema, kerangka penilaian, kriteria penilaian, pemarkahan dan proses penilaian. Kesemua kandungan ini disorot berdasarkan dapatan dari literatur dan pengetahuan yang diperolehi melalui kajian ini. Temu ramah juga mendapati bahawa terdapat permintaan dan maklum balas positif dari para pakar mengenai keperluan amalan pengiktirafan dan penganugerah untuk meningkatkan kawasan hijau yang berkualiti dan meningkatkan industri landskap sepenuhnya. Maklumat yang diperoleh dari kajian ini akan berguna bagi Jabatan Landskap Nasional Malaysia, pengamal ruang hijau, penyelidik, dan pihak berkuasa tempatan yang berusaha meningkatkan kualiti tempat dan kualiti hidup.

Kata kunci: Anugerah, faktor penyebab, temu ramah pakar, sistem pengiktirafan, taman kualiti.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Quality green spaces such as public parks, sport fields, woodlands, gardens, and other open vegetated spaces including water corridors have a big influence in raising the quality of life and quality of place. These green spaces provide opportunities for leisure (Holt et al., 2019), boost social cohesions and relations (Jennings & Bamkole, 2019), contribute to the environmental regulations (Rakhshandehroo et al., 2017), promote awareness and understanding of nature (Mansor & Harun, 2014), and also promote aesthetic value in the midst of residential, offices, shops and other buildings (Southon et al., 2017). It also provides us an answer to the most persistent challenges our societies face, including climate change, public health, society segregations, and food security.

Over the year, green spaces in urban and suburban context have been constantly provided services and benefits that have no set economical value. But it has become increasingly common nowadays to evaluate them in terms of their ample contributions to their surrounding communities (Jansson, 2014). The recent trend towards the increased land development, non-communicable disease (e.g., hypertension, diabetes, obesity), social injustice, particularly in urban areas, makes the ability to determine the quality values of green spaces important in order to ensure their existence and designation.

However, because each green space offers different benefits, such as environmental, tourism, recreational, transportation, aesthetic and health-related nature, no one method exists to measure all such benefits simultaneously (Chaytor et al., 2014; Nicholls & Crompton, 2005). Synonymous, not all green spaces are similar or provided the same amenities, and thus their impact on the quality of life and place may vary (Wheeler et al., 2015).

1.2 Research Background

A research by Lindholst et al. (2016) has anticipated that the practice of recognizing and awarding quality green space can become an effective and feasible approach to highlight the importance of quality green space publicly. Joubert (2016) further signified that recognition program with the combination of incentive likes award, reward and certification has the potential to cater mass attention from the non-research community, offers fast exchange of knowledge and, boost the involving party motivation and competitiveness.

The term recognition can be defined in many different ways. While most management practitioners and scholarly articles in business and human resources management defined recognition as getting a reward, earning an incentive for reaching a goal, or celebrating success at work, Recognition Professionals International, formerly the NAER stated recognition as "An after-the-fact display of appreciation or acknowledgment of an individual or team's desired behavior, effort, or business result that supports the organization's goals and values" (Alexis, 2017, para. 3). The statement was further reinforced by the World Wide Recognition Company Inc. (2018), stating that a good recognition program should include rewards, awards, incentives, and celebrations.

This study postulated that by converging the assumptions on the factor affecting quality green space with the practice of recognition and award-giving, we can celebrate, improvise, and lengthen the organization or personal effort (e.g., green space practitioner, proprietor, group, or person with similar interest) to inspire many others. It also benefiting for Malaysia to establish a new standard approach in provisioning their quality green space, accumulate non-research community attention and participation, and raise the environmental awareness in such a direct and effective way.

However, measuring the quality radiates or inherits by green space was reputed to be a broad study, hard to be simplified, and somewhat complicated (Lindholst et al., 2012). The green space quality should not only be evaluated by their immediate appearance and face value, but it also needs to be critically scrutinized in order to make their inherent assumptions, applications, choices, biases, and particularities transparent for various decision-makers and interests in the public realm (Lindholst et al., 2012).

Although there existed several scientific studies that prompted a variety of methods to statistically computed the green space quality into numerical and descriptive value, Lindholst et al. (2015) further amplified that most of the specific characters in public parks and green spaces were not usually evaluated normatively in the same way by everyone. The latter was further supported by Madureira et al. (2018) that stated green spaces normally were required to perform multiple roles depending on their local context whilst most measuring methods advocate a more generic assumption in scaling the services and quality executed by the green space.

Despite the challenge with the non-standardized practices in computing green space quality and limited access to a scholarly article on green space recognition and award-giving practice, this research attempt to draw some conclusion from the application of the practice itself to support in providing quality landscape and environment in Malaysia. The focus of this research will be on the topic of quality green space, factors affecting quality green space, recognition program, and award-giving practice.

1.3 Problem Statement

In Malaysia, the focus for developing and providing Malaysian with quality landscape and quality green spaces were outlined within the aspiration of Malaysian National Landscape Policy (National Landscape Department, 2011). Yet, the increasing reports on the Malaysian green space encroachment have led various organization and concern community to question the Malaysian policies efficacy and its credibility in protecting the existence of green space. According to the Malaysia's Performance Management and Delivery Unit (PEMANDU, 2014), Malaysia has recorded a drastic declined in its green space provisioning by 35 percent in four years due to the pressure of limited land, land scarcity, densification and shifting in need for more profitable urban project. The latter was alarming as it can contribute to the inadequacy of quantity and quality green space in Malaysia (Maryanti et al., 2016).

The stated problems appeared due to several factors. The factors may include, i- blind adoption by Malaysia on studies, strategies, practices and, advanced technology used in temperate-zone countries (Maryanti et al., 2017; Sachs, 2001), ii- conflict and misinterpretation by the non-researcher community such as public and government on the green spaces' worth (Lindholst et al., 2012), iii-many research remained as a concept due to the research-to-practice gaps (Mallonee et al., 2006), iv- specific characters in public parks and green spaces were not evaluated normatively in the same way by everyone (Lindholst et al., 2015), v- no platform or approach to effectively measure, rate and present the worth of quality green space (Fongar et al., 2019) and vi- lack of technique or comprehensive method that were able to simplified the value of green space into a short numerical and economic evidence (Nicholls & Crompton, 2005).

Due to these factors, when austerity and economic recession happened, green spaces and other non-statutory spaces were often the first component to be affected and experienced decline in number (Whitten, 2019). Although a variety of technique and method have been used to quantified the green space worth, they were often failed to extend into an action-based practice that can be utilized by the professional or practitioner (Lindholst et al. 2012). A more direct, popular and feasible approach to represent, rates and celebrate the quality inherits by green space should be introduced to elaborate the value and importance of quality green spaces.

Therefore, this study attempts to devise a suitable recognition and award-giving scheme that can assess or rate the quality standard of Malaysian green spaces using the identified factors affecting the quality of green spaces in Malaysia. The insight obtained from the study may improve the perspectives of communities such as the park users, government agencies involved with park management, design professionals and general public among others, in appreciating green space value and quality.

1.4 Research Questions

The following research questions were formulated to address the concerns raised in the problem statements.

- 1. What is the understanding, opinions, and perceptions of professional Landscape Architects on the current practice of recognizing and awardgiving used in the Malaysian landscape industry?
- 2. What are the factors affecting the quality of green spaces in Malaysia?
- 3. How to propose a new recognition and award-giving scheme that assess and rate the quality of green spaces in Malaysia?

1.5 Research Aims

This research aims to propose a new recognition and award-giving scheme that could assess and rate the quality of green spaces in Malaysia.

1.6 Research Objectives

The following objectives were formulated to help this study to achieve the research goal:

- To gain perspectives from professional landscape architects on the recognition and award-giving practices currently used in the Malaysian landscape industry.
- 2. To identify factors affecting the quality green spaces in Malaysia.
- To propose a new recognition and award-giving scheme that assessed and rate the quality of green spaces in Malaysia by using the identified factors.

1.7 Research Significance

Quality green spaces are significant in the improvement of mental wellbeing and physical health. Malaysian National Landscape Department has a mission which stated "To create holistic landscape development with high quality and special identity that is sustainable by considering the balance of physical, social, and economic environment through efficient implementation and management system" (National Landscape Department, 2011, p. 11). The practice of recognizing quality green spaces also has proven to be an excellent approach for fostering a wide range of collaborative efforts across diverse communities, all while assisting the country in addressing a variety of environmental and societal issues (Ellicott, 2016). The result and information gained via the recognition and award-giving practice can further be utilized to establish an agreed standard for the service quality provided by green space management, help them to justify

and evaluate funding and bring back the community to enjoy nature. This approach also allows Malaysia to accommodate a swift information-sharing effort regarding its green space value. Urban planners, landscape architects, green space managers and proprietors, environmental assessors, town developers, policymakers, and the public were examples of communities who will benefit from the practice of recognition and award-giving quality green space.

1.8 Assumptions and Limitation

This research rivets on the practice of recognizing and award-giving quality green spaces in Malaysia. It has included professionals that have relevant experience with Malaysian green space development and the practice of recognition and award-giving used by the Malaysian landscape industry. The focus on the practice of recognition and award-giving were limited to the practice that appraise, rate and celebrate the green space standard. The study also centers on the factor affecting the quality green space that were specifically significant in the Malaysian context. The proposal put forth in this study has adopted based from the framework applied by the current best practice. The framework adoption from the current best practices helped to guide the proposal adaptation according to the Malaysian context.

1.9 Definition of Terms

The followings are the operational definitions for the terms used for this study:

Recognition

Recognition is a constructive response and judgment made about a person's contribution, which reflecting not just on their work performance but also on a person's personal dedication and engagement on a regular or ad hoc basis. A recognition can be expressed formally or informally, individually or collectively, privately or publicly, and monetarily or non-monetarily (Brun & Dugas, 2008).

Award-giving practice

Frey (2006) stated that awards is a form of device (along with monetary income and intrinsic motivation) that motivates individuals to exert effort. The statement are later improvised by Callagher and Smith (2017), concluding that an award are a kind of social feedback platform communicating that an individuals, groups, or companies have attained some form of excellence in their field.

Quality

According to Parasuraman et al. (1985), quality is the sum of all properties, characters or attributes of an object, system or process based on the individual attitudes over a period of times after multiple experiences with it (cited in Baker & Crompton, 2000, p.787). Quality may also relate to the degree of excellence that influence the individual satisfaction over a service or object (Wille, 1992), e.g., product, hospitality service. Meanwhile, from the business and managerial prospect, quality are defined as the "conformance to specification", "continuous improvement" (Wille, 1992) and "fitness for use" (Smith, 1993).

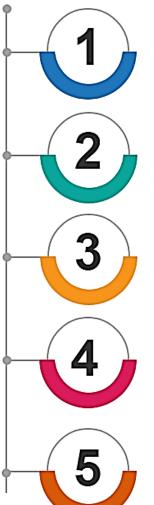
Green space

Taylor and Hochuli (2017) defined the green space as natural areas and urban vegetation, i.e., lawn, trees, shrub and grasses. The term of urban vegetation covered a number of urban greenery either on the horizontal or vertical axis of the land. Burgess (2015) also elaborates the green spaces is a feature that composed from any green and blue element operating at different spatial scale. This includes green roofs and walls, street trees, private gardens, parks, open spaces, playing fields, woodlands, allotments, wetlands, road verges, green corridors, and streams, canals and other water bodies as a part of green space networking.

1.10 Thesis Structure

This study described a practical approach to assess and celebrate the quality green space in Malaysia by incorporating the practice of recognizing and award-giving that are widely applied across the globe. The state of existing Malaysian green spaces' recognition and award-giving practice, its benefit, issues, ideas, and factors influencing quality green space were investigated. This thesis is structured into five chapters (Figure 1). The first section elaborates on the research background. It provides an overview of the quality green space and how to utilized the practice of recognition and award-giving to appraise and assess the standard or quality green spaces in Malaysia. The next section discusses the problem and issues that hinder the growth of Malaysian quality green space and the need for a practical approach to rate the quality standard of Malaysian green space. The next chapter elaborates on the method used and followed by the chapter on the results and findings. The last chapter is on the recommendations, conclusions and suggestions on future research.





Chapter 01: INTRODUCTION

This chapter introduces the research background and briefs the problem statement. It also elaborates the questions, goal, objectives, significant, assumptions and limitation posed for this study. The chapter further include the operational definitions of the terms used.

Chapter 02: LITERATURE REVIEW

The chapter provides a review on the literatures related to the practices of recognition and award-giving, quality green space and factor affecting quality green space. It also reviews the current best practice available in the industry.

Chapter 03: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter discuss the method used to achieve the research goal and objectives posed for the study.

Chapter 04: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Chapter 4 presents the details of collected research data, findings and discussion which reflect the research goal, questions and objectives in Chapter 01

Chapter 05: CONCLUSION

This chapter draws a conclusion from the study findings. It also offers recommendations for improvement and future research related to this study field.

Figure 1.1: Thesis structure posed for this study

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